

PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Case Officer: Matthew Jones

Parish: Ivybridge **Ward:** Ivybridge West

Application No: 3074/15/FUL

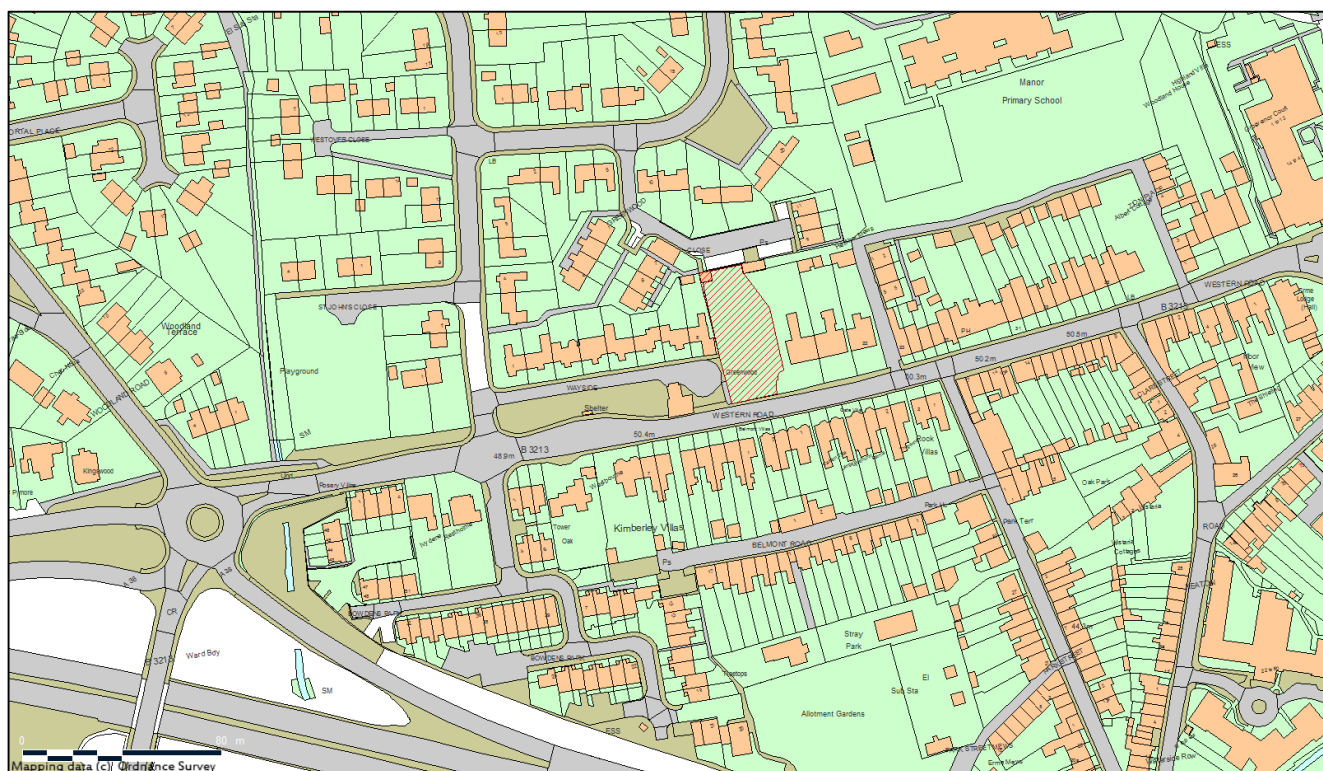
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Site Address: Greenwood, Western Road, Ivybridge, Devon, PL21 9AN

Development: Erection of 5 new dwellings

Reason item is being put before Committee: Due to concerns regarding access, parking, bin storage, the impact on the setting of the Listed Building and the impact on the Air Quality Management Area.



Recommendation: Conditional approval

Conditions

Time

Accord with Plans

Materials and samples prior to installation

Eaves and verges details prior to installation

Joinery details prior to installation

Rainwater goods details prior to installation

Retention of all parking areas in perpetuity, no parking in other areas

Accord with provisions of arboricultural method statement

Landscape plan prior to commencement

Accord with details of submitted drainage strategy

Units 2, 3, 4 rooflights to rear elevation obscure glazed

Lighting specification prior to installation

Works to avoid bird nesting season

Removal of Permitted Development Rights

CEMP prior to commencement of development

Unsuspected contamination

Key issues for consideration:

The main issues are the impact of the proposal on the setting of the designated heritage asset, design, impact on the street scene, massing, access, parking, drainage, ecology, affordable housing, air quality and any impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties. .

Site Description:

The application site is a parcel of land within Ivybridge The historic wall which bounds the site suggests an association with the grade II listed villa 'Greenwood' which is to the east. The site is directly within the setting of this designated heritage asset, most notably when the site is approached from the west.

The once larger parcel of land has been subdivided with a newer stone wall which runs centrally through the site. Access is from an opening in the wall within the south west corner, from Wayside. There is a pedestrian gate leading to Greenwood Close at the back of the site, adjacent to a stone built outbuilding in the north west corner of the plot.

The residential curtilage of neighbouring dwellings is to the east and west, Western Road is to the South and a parking area serving a separate development is to the north. The trees within and abutting the site benefit from Tree Preservation Orders.

The site is within the Ivybridge Development Boundary. The town is designated as a Critical Drainage Area and the site is also within the Air Quality Management zone around the congested Western Road.

The Proposal:

Planning permission is sought for the erection of 5 dwellings. The dwellings are over two or one and a half storeys with render under slate roofs. Windows are timber / aluminium composites Vehicular access is from the existing opening onto Wayside, which will be the only vehicular approach to the site.

The front unit is a detached dwelling fronting Western Road. Behind this building is a row of three one and a half storey dwellings with dormers at the eaves and a single detached dwelling is located to the rear, northern area of the site.

A revised site plan has been accepted which alters the parking arrangement for one of the units, following consideration of the concerns raised by the highways officer.

Consultations:

- Conservation Team

No objection subject to conditions - *Further to my previous comments having considered the details further and having spoken with the agent then providing the conditions I have suggested earlier are included in any approval then I am satisfied that the scheme will not be damaging to the character of the area or the setting of the adjacent Listed Building.*

- County Highways Authority

Objection relating to two parking spaces and bin storage – suggest condition if minded to approve (full response within file)

- Affordable Housing

Consider the project to be borderline viable without financial contributions – do not wish to pursue financial contributions for this reason (full response within file)

- Environmental Health Section

No objection

- Landscape and recreation team

No objection subject to condition and financial contribution towards recreation of 8,925 pitches and £5,890 play

- South West Water

Notification of presence of public sewer within the site

- Ivybridge Town Council

Objection relating to traffic, access, parking provision, congestion, air quality, overdevelopment, plot density, harm to the setting of the listed building Greenwood

Representations:

13 letters of representation have been received at the time of writing this report. Concerns raised within the letters of objection are summarised as follows:

- Constitutes garden grabbing
- Will harm character of area
- Will have harmful impact on residential amenity
- Will cause additional access and parking problems, most notably around Wayside
- Will harm the setting of the listed building
- Could damage important trees
- Parking areas appear cramped
- The construction phase will cause disruption

Relevant Planning History

27/0280/15/F - Erection of 7 new dwellings comprising 4 houses and 3 flats and associated works – Withdrawn

27/0803/13/PREMIN - Pre-application enquiry for 5- 7 new build units (open market/affordable mix) – Officers support forthcoming on a without prejudice basis, subject to agreed revisions

27/0358/10/F - Householder application for erection of dividing wall to east of site and opening of an access gate to the west of site – Conditional Approval

27/1543/04/F - Erection of new dwelling, garage and access – Conditional Approval

Analysis

Principle of development

The site is located within the Ivybridge Development Boundary where policy CS1 supports, in principle, new residential development subject to all other material planning considerations.

Access and parking

Officers have carefully considered the third party comments relating to access and parking, particularly comments regarding access to and from Wayside. The constraints of this junction has also been specifically raised with the specialist highways officer. The advice from the highways professional is that the principle of development, the amount of parking provision and the implications for access to and from Wayside are acceptable. The highways officer has stated that:

The principle of five dwellings served by Wayside is accepted by the Highway Authority noting the width of Wayside is near to 4.8m wide. Also the proposals would likely only generate an additional 25 - 30 two way vehicle movements per day according to the national evidence. It is likely that during each of the two peak traffic hours in the day (8:00am - 9:00am and 16:00pm - 17:00pm) the proposals will add around four two way vehicle trips to Wayside. Whilst coming out the junction is not ideal if turning left this increase is considered to be marginal and drivers can wait for an appropriate gap to get out on a green phase or stack in the first space before the stop line.

However, the highways officer has registered concern about the location of the bin store and the specification of two parallel parking spaces.

Following receipt of these comments the applicant has revised the relevant element of the scheme to provide parking spaces as requested. Although the comments made regarding the bin store for unit 1 are noted, officers measure the distance to be 25m from the entrance, only 5m above the preferred distance. Overall, officers consider that this distance is acceptable, and preferable to moving the bins toward the collective bin store closer to the entrance. Such an arrangement would require a round trip of approximately 60m every time an occupant of unit 1 would like to place something in the bin, and this would constitute poor urban design.

A CEMP condition is attached to this recommendation as suggested in order to mitigate, so far as reasonably possible, the disruption faced by neighbouring residents during any construction phase.

Design, massing and visual impact within the streetscene

The site plan is considered to show appropriate ratios of outdoor amenity space to serve each dwelling, avoiding over development of the site.

The residential area around Western Road is one of the older parts of Ivybridge and is characterised by high density terraced dwellings, many of which are at rights angles to Western Road. Small mews style terraces are prevalent in the area.

The design of the proposal takes clear reference from the local vernacular but is presented in a way which incorporates modern elements and materials. This is considered to be an acceptable design approach for this site. The quality of the scheme will be largely dependent on the use of materials and this can be secured by way of planning condition.

The site is visible from Western Road and most prominently when approaching from the west. This is an arterial route into the town's core and, as such, the site has an important role to play within the streetscene as a gateway site where the transition is made from low density C20 Ivybridge to the older, more densely populated centre further to the east.

The orientation of the mews terrace towards this viewpoint, and the articulation added to the west flank wall of the south unit, show an appreciation of how the site is experienced as a gateway into the older part of the town, and adds weight in favour of the proposal as an appropriate architectural response to the constraints of the site. Overall, the proposal is considered to offer an improvement to the street scene compared to the existing vacant site and the blank flank wall of Greenwood.

Neighbour Impact

Policy DP3 requires officers to assess the impact on neighbouring properties against '*the level of amenity generally accepted within the locality*'.

Overlooking towards properties on the south of Western Road will be at a good distance and no more intrusive than the other relationship of mutual overlooking along the street. The parking area at the rear, and absence of openings on the north of the development, will maintain the privacy of properties located to the north.

Neighbour Impact on Greenwood

The properties along this part of Western Road follow a similar scale and principal building line but, not uncommonly, also feature lower rear tenements which protrude at 90 degrees to the main ridge and extend into their rear garden areas. These rear tenement elements each have impact on neighbouring dwellings through dominance, overlooking and loss of light.

Officers consider the scale and design of the proposal to generally conform to this existing character of development. The front unit (no.5) will follow the building line and plan of the main elements of the neighbouring villas, and the mews style terrace will broadly conform to the rear tenements.

Although the mews terrace will be longer and in some respects higher, this additional massing is not considered to lead to material harm to Greenwood to the extent that a reason for refusal could be sustained.

Officers also acknowledge that, in adopting a 'mews' style, the eaves height has been brought down lower than a typical two storey property with dormers utilised to maintain an acceptable degree of first floor accommodation. The reduced height of the eaves, the pitch of the roof away from Greenwood and the distance of 7m away from the shared boundary all serve to reduce the impact of the development on the residential amenity of Greenwood.

Although Greenwood is privileged to currently enjoy a very open outlook, this is clearly an exception to the prevailing character of neighbour relationships within the row, and for the above reasons, the impact of the proposal is considered to conform to the level of amenity generally accepted within the locality.

Neighbour Impact on Wayside

The adjacent property to the west is no.8 Wayside. This property has a generous extension to its rear which will itself largely prevent direct overlooking. Remaining overlooking from the first floor of the end of terrace and the northern unit, by nature of the separation distance and oblique angles, is not considered above and beyond overlooking experienced from one property to another across the rear of Wayside.

Overall, the impact on the amenity of no.8 Wayside is considered to conform to the principles of policy DP3.

Impact on setting of Grade II listed building

The Council has previously taken the view that the intention was always to continue constructing villas westwards along Western Road.

A Conservation Specialist has previously stated that *“The large garden to the west of the house (the development site) appears to be an anomaly in relation to the form and layout of Greenwood and its neighbour as well as the grain of this part of the town. This evidence, together with the blank west elevation of Greenwood, leads me to suspect that it was originally intended to continue building in this direction as a terrace”*.

Indeed, planning permission has been granted in the noughties for residential development on this site for a single large dwelling house.

The principle of building on this land is therefore considered to conform to the historic and consistent intention for development of the Greenwood site. Enjoyment of Greenwood is most associated with views of its southern frontage, which is clearly the most formal and high status of its elevations. In contrast the west gable is devoid of architectural features and was clearly not intended to be as prominent, or to play such a pivotal role as a gateway frontage within Ivybridge.

The proposed development is not considered to have a harmful impact on the setting of Greenwood. The scheme brings forward the, always intended, development of the site but with a group of buildings which are clearly subservient to Greenwood.

This physical and architectural subservience respects and retains its formality, prestige and primacy and does not diminish one’s enjoyment of the building when it is viewed from the south, from Western Road.

In fact, the articulation of the west elevations of the development is considered by officers to offer an enhanced gateway site, offering a more positive contribution to the public realm than the currently expressionless gable of Greenwood itself.

For these reasons, and with due regard Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the relevant sections of the NPPF, officers conclude that the proposed development will not harm the setting of the adjacent designated heritage asset.

Trees, drainage and ecology

Officers consider the submitted arboricultural impact assessment and method statement to adequately protect the valuable trees located on the south of the site. The ecologist has concluded with no objection provided a condition is imposed preventing the commencement of development within the bird nesting season. The implementation of the submitted drainage strategy will also be secured through planning condition.

Viability and financial contributions

The applicant has submitted a viability assessment with the planning application indicating that any additional financial contributions imposed by the Local Planning Authority would render the scheme unviable. After consideration of this viability assessment, the Affordable Housing team is in agreement and has not requested financial contributions towards affordable housing on this basis.

Due to a perceived, clear viability issue, officers are also minded not to pursue the sum requested by the landscape and recreation team. The social benefit of the scheme is in itself providing housing of which a clear proportion are smaller and therefore more affordable units. The Affordable Housing officer has stated that:

'The build costs are agreed as these are current figures used in the RICS guidance for developments on this scale. The interest fees at 7.5% are probably the only area that I would dispute as we tend to look at between 6% and 6.5%. However, the developer is not achieving the expected 17.5% profit which the HCA use in their viability appraisals and this would not make the scheme any more viable to provide the policy requested off site contribution.'

'By providing smaller units i.e. the 3 x two bed semis these would be more affordable to most and may provide the opportunity for some first time homes for people who are unable to afford the larger units which we tend to see in the more rural locations which are clearly unaffordable.'

Air Quality Management

Officers have carefully considered the implications of the proposal on the air quality management area, and also the information submitted within the application.

After consideration, the Council's Environmental Health specialists are not objecting to the proposal. The Environmental Health Officer has stated that:

'Having considered the information provided the applicant has demonstrated that the future residents will not be exposed to excessive levels of NO2 however the assessment does not detail the impact that the development will have on the existing air quality management area, however based on recent developments it is highly unlikely that this scale of development will have a more than significant impact on air quality and as Devon County Council are not objecting on the grounds of traffic impact I would not be able to sustain an objection to this application.'

Conclusion

The proposal provides short term economic benefit through the construction phase and long term social benefit through the provision of housing within a district currently experiencing a shortfall in supply.

The comments made by the Town Council and within submitted letters of representation are considered within the above analysis. None of the issues raised are considered to outweigh the benefits of the scheme or cannot be resolved through appropriate use of planning conditions.

For the reasons outlined above this proposal is considered acceptable and in accordance with the relevant development plan policies. This application is therefore recommended for approval subject to appropriate conditions. This application has been considered in accordance with Section 38 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and with Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Planning Policy

South Hams LDF Core Strategy

CS1 Location of Development
CS7 Design
CS9 Landscape and Historic Environment

Development Policies DPD

DP1 High Quality Design
DP2 Landscape Character
DP3 Residential Amenity
DP5 Conservation and Wildlife
DP6 Historic Environment
DP7 Transport, Access & Parking

South Hams Local Plan

SHDC 1 Development Boundaries

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Considerations under Human Rights Act 1998 and Equalities Act 2010

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equalities Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.